SRC-02-16-94-M

SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting of Thursday, February 17, 1994
Room BC-110, 10:00

Present: E. Abouheif, S. Ali, E. Besso, P. Bird, **T. Bui (Chair),** U. de Brentani, P. Lightbown, K. Lipke, E. Loo (recording secretary), D. Markiewicz, J.F. Plamondon, C. Suen

Regrets: P. Shizgal, K. Thulasiraman

Absent: A.B. Ibrahim

Guests: C.L. Bertrand, M. Cohen

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED AND DISTRIBUTED TO SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

SRC-02-17-94-D1	Companion presentation to the 1994-1999 Financial Framework Document.
SRC-02-17-94-D2	Letter dated January 24, 1994 from Dr. Peter Morand of NSERC to Dr. T. Bui, re: NSERC Strategy document.
SRC-02-17-94-D3	Guidelines prepared jointly by the Medical Research Council (MRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).
SRC-02-17-94-D4	FRDP questionnaire to Start-up and Targeted grant holders.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

1. Approval of Agenda (SRC-02-17-94-A)

Item 7 (c) was moved to item 7 (b) and vice versa, the agenda for the meeting was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes for the meeting of November and December were approved.

3. Business arising from Minutes

None.

4. Report of the Chair

None.

5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services

Erica Besso, Associate Director reported the following:

1) For the first three months she was working on a project to identify major research activity and she has created a database with a number of fields which includes the centres and reflects a large number of individuals. She circulated a copy of her final report.

2) There is a change in the Leave Research Grant option, whereby disbursement of the award will be made directly from Payroll account.

3) The FRDP Evaluation Committee has had their first meeting and they are planning to have their report out by April.

4) There is a change in the distribution process for overhead on contracts which is divided and a portion of which goes to the Associate Deans. These overhead will be put in a holding account as of now in order to be disbursed only at the completion of the contract and therefore available to cover potential deficits that has occurred in the past, where it is difficult to get the money back and this is being implemented by Emily Carter (formerly Karakul).

   P. Bird questioned whether this is being done because she does not know at the beginning of the contract what the overhead will be or how much will be paid.

   E. Besso answered that even when the amount is known, what has happened in the past is that by the end of contract there is a significant deficit that has been incurred, and finding a source to fill the deficit has been a point of concern, some of the funds could be addressed by using a portion of these overhead and they are being kept in reserve as a potential safety feature until the end of the contract.

5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services

P. Bird noted that if she is doing this in order to protect us against somebody overspending on their contract, he is more concerned he thinks that this money should be taken directly from the person who overspends and not other people.

E. Besso noted he made a good point, the debts to be reimbursed from immediate cash flow.

6. Question Period

NONE

7. a) Procedural Guidelines for Periodic Appraisal of Research Centres (SRC-01-20-94-D2)

It was suggested that we should wait for to-morrow's meeting between the Chair, Barbara Mackay and the Associate Deans in charge of Unit Appraisals of Faculties to discuss the linkage between the appraisal of research centres and the existing academic appraisal process.

7 b) Report of the Expert Task Force on the Enhancement of University-Wide Research Support Services and Facilities (SRC-01-20-94-D5)

Chair noted in March 1992, Senate established an Expert Task Force on the Enhancement of University-Wide Research Support, Services and Facilities. The Task Force met a number of times to consider submissions by SRC and proposals from the research community. He welcomed Dr. C. Bertrand, Vice-Rector, Services and Chair of the Task Force and Dr. M. Cohen, Vice-Rector, Institutional Relations and Finance.

C. Bertrand remarked that the document is a priority list decided upon by members of the Task Force, there were a number of issues raised within the Task Force itself and members of the University community. All the issues were well examined and what we have are the main issues structured to three categories: issues with little cost implications, relatively inexpensive issues and expensive issues.

The difficulties in communication often result in delays and errors in processing purchase orders, timesheets, expense claims, etc., hence it is recommended that the resources currently devoted, in various departments, to research services, should be centralised within the Office of Research Services. (Recommendation 1)

7 **b) Report of the Expert Task Force on the Enhancement of University-Wide Research Support Services and Facilities (SRC-01-20-94-D5)**

There is a difficulty of providing Start-up funds particularly in the Engineering and Computer Science, Studios Arts and Fine Arts. Recommendation 2 is a way to use money that is already in the system. Each year a certain number of Faculty retires and if they are replaced, they are generally replaced at a lower salary, the savings realised from the difference between the salary of a new hire and the former faculty member be left with the Faculty and earmarked specifically for reallocation for start-up funds or for technical support for research. (Recommendation 2)

M. Cohen explains that the system cost already takes into account the different between the salary of retirees and new hires. It is not true that the money is available in the system. It was agreed that this recommendation be removed.

J.F. Plamondon questioned whether savings could be realised if we hire more full-time faculties and reduce part-time faculties, we will get researcher and at the same time professor, we will cut down cost, in addition that same person will teach more courses for the same price.

M. Cohen remarked that at the last presentation he made at the Faculty of Arts and Science, he made this remark. He has been repeating this for a long time. There are some extreme scenarios, if we could hire an extra 100 full-time faculties and get rid of all part-time faculties, we will get a lot more researchers, more young people, increase the number of students and have achieved all the bottom line that need to be achieved for the financial framework.

An inexpensive way to recognise the importance of research is to establish a number of appointments from among our current faculty members as University Research Professor. (Recommendation 3)

A number of submissions involves the hiring process, initial hiring is the key to developing further successful research (and researchers) at Concordia. An increase in the recruitment budget is required in order to ensure that Concordia appoints faculty members with the greatest potential for research success. (Recommendation 4) It was noted that this matter should be dealt with at the Faculty level.

There seems to be a great deal of confusion regarding contract overhead. The overhead policy should be readily available to all through the Office of Research Services. (Recommendation 5)

M. Cohen remarked that the 50% of overhead that goes to the General University Revenues amounts to a total of about $100,000 on revenues of $200 M. Out of the $200 M, about $100 M are spent to support research in terms of salaries and infrastructures etc.

Further discussions were entailed, it was remarked that $100,000 might represent a small amount to the University budget but this is a considerable amount to the faculty and the researcher. It will have a large impact if it provides incentives to the researchers. In other universities the overhead money is used to provide space, technical support for the researchers. It is time to change this policy so as to create a bigger impact.

7 **b) Report of the Expert Task Force on the Enhancement of University-Wide Research Support Services and Facilities (SRC-01-20-94-D5)**

Chair noted that at UQAM the overhead is distributed as follows: 10% to the University, 45% to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research to promote development of research, get new contracts, to buy new equipments, help researcher, finance new projects, 25% goes back to the researcher or team, 20% goes to the department or centre.

M. Cohen suggested that T. Bui, C. Bertrand and himself should look at the possibilities in Recommendation 5.

The Vice-Rector, Services establish a committee to investigate the reallocation of space in order to provide more space for research activities. (Recommendation 7)

The Vice-Rector, Services, in collaboration with the Office of the Rector, establish a plan and a timetable for the acquisition of a building for the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. This recommendation if implemented will relieve the space problems in other sectors. (Recommendation 8)

The Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors that the goal for graduate student funding in the next capital campaign be increase to $8,000,000. If we want to increase the number of graduate students, we have to be competitive. (Recommendation 9)

M. Cohen informed that the Senate and the Board have already approved and it is $9 M.

J.F. Plamondon asked whether there is any chance for the library budget going up as suggested by Dr. Bonin.

M. Cohen answered that there is a chance that the library may be able to reallocate significant money through acquisitions by a review process.

C. Bertrand remarked that there has been significant savings in the library, they used to pay $250,000 for subscriptions and they have cut down to $30,000 and all the money went to acquisition. There are other ways and Dr. Bonin will continue to look at them. To conclude, he remarked that he does not think that anybody on the Task Force assumes that everything will happen overnight, at the same time, it is very important to be on the agenda of the University, whether it is research, services or the enhancement of teaching and then eventually we will all have to sit down and sort things out. If we do not have these things on the table then we cannot come back later and say we meant to do that, all of these are negotiable.

It was agreed that the Chair will revise the Report, taking into account today's discussions and circulate the revised report before the next meeting.

7 **c) Financial Framework: 1994 to 1999 (SRC-01-20-94-D3), (SRC-02-17-94-D1)**

M. Cohen gave a brief explanation on the document Financial Framework: 1994 to 1999. We have there is that we have grown tremendously on a financial point of view. From 1983-1984, we went from a healthy situation to an enormous hole in 3 short years, and we have been trying to get out of the hole, trying to fill it since then. We cannot go back to a situation like 1983-84, there is no way we can afford to run an annual deficit and start pilling debts. We need to continue to try as in the past to say that we are going to be fiscally responsible but we know we need to spend money on new things.

9. Adjournment

It was moved and seconded (P. Bird and C. Suen) that the meeting be adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

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